being distributed was spontaneously given the name "Reagan" in recognition of the life-saving generosity

Washington, D.C.

The writer is administrator for the Agency for International Development.

Shirtless women: More sound and fury

As second-generation feminists, we are outraged and embarrassed by Ramona Santorelli and her topless cohorts — nine women more concerned with making a media event than a coherent statement of women's rights. Attracting the attention of an exploitative press and an assortment of leering bystanders undermines the credibility of women who have genuinely struggled for equality.

We do not take issue with a woman's right to publicly bare her breasts; we do question the significance of the gesture. We feel violated, not only by the two sniggering males who, on the morning of the protests, asked us if we were going to Cobbs Hill Park to "bare our convictions," but by those protesters who claim to speak for us.

The circus-like manner in which the protest was conducted succeeded in inciting the very sexism it would abolish. It fostered the prevalent attitude that feminists are devoted to petty causes, and that, as one man said to us, "All those broads want to do is show their stuff."

We live in a critical time. Women are the victims of disproportionate poverty and sexual violence; we face unequal compensation in the workplace, an increasingly anti-feminist administration, the threat of a Roe vs. Wade reversal, and perhaps the ultimate feminist issue, nuclear devastation.

We hate to see such grandstanding garner more attention than these crucial issues. We face gender-related conflicts daily. The right to go topless is not one of them.

Thank you, Ms. Santorelli et al, for reducing women's issues to an absurdity.

Casey Sparks, Amy Brown, Patricia Neill
Rochester

A long tradition

I have become disappointed that so many dismiss the action of those arrested as "ridiculous and inappropriate." This all sounds painfully familiar.

I ask female readers: How many of you are wearing pants today? How many of you remember when it was ridiculous and inappropriate for women to wear slacks?

A generation or so ago, a few dedicated women suffered derision so that you could enjoy the comfort, freedom of movement, and snappy look of trousers. Less than 20 years ago, my older sister was sent home for wearing blue jeans to Monroe High School. Blue jeans!

The point is more than sartorial. Over the years, women have been warned that it would be ridiculous and inappropriate for them to do such absurd things as wear skirts above their ankles, attend college, bob their hair, drink a cocktail in public, vote, remain single, drive a forklift, change a tire, beat a man at chess, join the army, lift weights, run for president, pilot a jetliner or space shuttle, deliver a sermon, practice law or medicine, earn a black belt in karate — the list is endless.

I doubt that I will ever appear topless in public, but I am equally unlikely to run for president, join the army, or drive a forklift. But because other women have fought for the right to do these things, the world that I have inherited is a richer, more democratic one.

At a time when a woman earns 59 cents for every dollar a man earns, and all of us live under the threat of nuclear extinction, there are more pressing issues than this one. Still, I'm pleased to see Rochester women carrying on, in this small way, the local tradition of feminism initiated by Susan B. Anthony so many years ago. Ridiculous and inappropriate? History will decide.

Cynthia M. Van Ness
Rochester

No comparison

Bringing in Susan B. Anthony and the vote is about as far-fetched as one can imagine! A vote and bare breasts are two entirely different things.

Saying "I wouldn't want to bare my breasts but I feel others should have the right to do so" is about as illogical as it can be. Can you picture a large grocery in a mall with half of the women dressed and the other half walking around with bare breasts? If one wants to go bare-breasted, how about your own back yard or a nudist camp?

Belle Brown Vershay
Rochester

Cover up, men

Instead of making it legal for women to go topless in public, let us revise the 1936 law and make men put their shirts back on.

No one is offended by the bare chest of a young Adonis, but who is not offended by the sight of a great big fat hairy gut hanging over the belt (worn disgustingly low) of a man who has let himself go to pot?

I know the female counterpart will be as obnoxious, only higher up.

The beautiful young people could care less. Many are very modest. It is only the slobs who are exhibitionists.

E. Deutsch
Rochester

What about modesty?

I, too, like District Attorney Relin, who was called "Scrooge" by Donahue, have this to say: "Bah, humbug."

Not once in the discussion was this question brought up: Whatever happened to modesty?

Margaret Smith
Rochester

Continuing problems at psychiatric center

On June 20 I visited Rochester Psychiatric Center and was pleased to observe a number of recent improvements: tube-feeding practices now in compliance with professional standards; upgraded physical therapy, recreational and rehabilitative programs; an adequate supply of geriatric lounge chairs for infirm patients; a more home-like decor in patients' living areas; increased staff; expanded opportunities for the more handicapped patients to be outdoors in nice weather.

I observed at least 125 patients who have tardive

patients were then advised of their rights; as a result, 25 patients are refusing medications.

Part of the problem is that the high and multiple dosages that have been prescribed at RPC have understandably caused patients to distrust their doctors.

RPC is still deficient if evaluated by American Psychiatric Association recommendations. These include keeping dosages as small as possible (what some RPC doctors consider to be "minimal" frighten